

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1283

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TAGS: ELAB, NU
SUBJECT: CONSTRUCTION WORKERS STRIKE

REF MANAGUA 1016

1. EARLY IN WEEK LEADERSHIP OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION SCAAS MADE RENEWED EFFORT TO ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH STRIKE IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WHICH IS NOW IN SEVENTH WEEK. ROVING GROUPS OF SCAAS MILITANTS VISITED BUILDING SITES APRIL 1-2 TRYING TO CONVINCE WORKERS TO LEAVE JOBS. THIS FAILING, ON APRIL 3 THEY RESORTED TO FORCE, AND REPORTEDLY SOME 14 SCAAS MEMBERS WERE ARRESTED AT THREE DIFFERENT SITES. ATTEMPT TO USE STRONG-ARM TACTICS APPARENTLY ALSO FAILED, AND 60-70 PCT OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS HAVE STAYED ON JOB.

2. MEANWHILE THE RECENTLY ORGANIZED CTN (SOCIAL CHRISTIAN) AFFILIATED HOSPITAL WORKERS FEDERATION APPROACHED LABOR MINISTER URGING HIM TO MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO MEDIATE DISPUTE AND GET NEGOTIATION TALKS STARTED AGAIN. CTN ISSUED COMMUNIQUE SUPPORTING STRIKE WHEN IT FIRST BEGAN, AND HOSPITAL WORKERS GROUP IN PARTICULAR IS INDEBTED TO SCAAS FOR CALLING SYMPATHY STRIKE IN APRIL 1974 TO SUPPORT NATION-WIDE HOSPITAL WORKERS STRIKE. SCAAS SUPPORT WAS PERHAPS DECISIVE IN PROMPTING GON TO FINALLY COME TO TERMS IN THAT LONG-DRAWN-OUT DISPUTE. RUMORS PERSIST THAT IF TALKS BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND SCAAS ARE NOT RESUMED THEN HOSPITAL WORKERS WILL CALL SYMPATHY STRIKE.

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3. TO UNDERCUT ITS TWO PRINCIPAL LABOR ANTAGONISTS, GON HAS OVER

PAST FEW WEEKS PURSUED TIME HONORED STRATEGY OF ORGANIZING ALTERNATE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED UNIONS. HOWEVER, OFICIALISTA CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION SUPPOSEDLY ORGANIZED TWO WEEKS AGO HAS NOT GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND; NOR DIES NEW HOSPITAL WORKERS UNIONS ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK TO PREEMPT CTN GROUP APPEAR LIKELY TO DO MUCH BETTER.

4. COMMENT: HOSPITAL WORKERS UNDOUBTEDLY FEEL STRONG PRESSURE TO SUPPORT THEIR UDEL ALLIES, SCAAS, IN CURRENT CONFLICT. ALTHOUGH IT MAY EVENTUALLY CALL BRIEF SYMPATHY STRIKE OF PERHAPS 24 HOURS, WE DO NOT THINK IT LIKELY THAT THE NEW AND STILL RELATIVELY WEAK CTN HOSPITAL WORKERS FEDERATION WILL JOIN INDEFINITE STRIKE IN WHICH SCAAS POSITION IN CONFLICT ENJOYS ONLY LIMITED POPULAR SUPPORT. UNTIL SCAAS CAN GET ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER, AND ELICIT COMPLIANCE WITH STRIKE BY ITS OWN RANK AND FILE, ITS FRIENDS AMONG HOSPITAL WORKERS ARE GOING TO BE RELUCTANT TO PUT THEIR OWN JOBS ON THE LINE.

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